

## Contact by Chibirini1

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**Summary:**

Eleven tries to figure out what Mike's kiss meant while hiding out in Hopper's cabin.

## Contact

### Author's Note:

This takes place in the 353 days that Eleven spent hiding out with Hopper, before all the craziness started. And yes, Matilda was published in 1988. I know. Just go with it. I thought it was appropriate.

El tried to sleep in every day when Hopper was away at work, but after he woke her up for breakfast each morning she couldn't go back to sleep. So she watched a lot of TV, read some books that Hopper left her. Anne of Green Gables and Matilda. El liked Matilda a lot, and if she could she would go to a library too. She tried to imagine a room full of books, but it was hard. Until she saw it on TV.

It was amazing. There was so much on TV that she had never seen before. So much she had never even thought of or dreamed about. She'd touch the dusty screen again and again, wishing she was there so she could feel and smell and taste everything. Some things were scary or reminded her of Papa. Some things reminded her of Mike.

She saw the thing that Mike did to her on TV a lot. A kiss. She tried to understand why, why it made her feel different than when someone got a hug. It was different somehow. Different.

She looked it up in the dictionary.

**Kiss:** verb: touch with the lips as a sign of love, sexual desire, reverence, or greeting.

What was love? Sexual desire? Reverence? She didn't know any of that. She tried looking the words up but it only made her more confused.

It was always a girl and a boy. Could it happen with a boy and a boy? She didn't see Mike do it to anyone else. Not Dustin or Lucas or Will.

It happened only with younger couples, not old ones. And not little kids. Sometimes it was moms and dads. She was so perplexed that

she finally decided to ask Hopper about it one night at dinner.

“What’s a kiss?”

Hopper looked up, his mouth full of the slimy noodles he called spaghetti. He chewed and then swallowed.

“What are you watching on TV, huh?”

She sighed. Sometimes, when she asked a question, Hopper would answer only with a question. It made her a little irritated.

“Tell me. Friends don’t lie.”

“So we’re friends now?” Hopper mumbled, stirring the noodles with his fork. When he saw her still staring at him, he sighed and put his fork down.

“A kiss is something two people do to say that they like each other. In a special way.”

Finally, a real answer. Something fluttered inside her. Mike liked her...in a special way?

“What does that mean? In a special way?”

Hopper shook his head. “Nothing you need to worry about.”

“Why?” she asked, indignant. She frowned at him.

Hopper pushed back his hair and frowned right back at her.

“Why are you so curious?”

“Curiouser and curiouser,” El said.

“Haha,” Hopper replied dryly. “Alice in Wonderland. So you’ve been reading, too. Well guess what? Curiosity killed the cat.”

El fell silent. She remembered a cat. A cat that hissed and meowed at her as she played with the cat’s mind. Papa had wanted her to kill it. To hurt that cat forever. She had told him no.

“Hey? Are you ok?” Hopper asked. El looked up, shaking a little to get rid of her memory.

She nodded and shoved some of the pasta in her mouth. It was kind of good, if you stopped noticing how slimy it was.

“So, did you see a kiss on TV or something?” He asked.

She nodded again.

“Yeah...On TV,” she said. It was kinda true.

“You didn’t go outside did you?”

She shook her head. That at least was true. Friends don’t lie, Mike had said. And Hopper was her friend.

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That night, when Hopper was asleep, El crept out of her room to turn on the TV really low. She turned it to a channel full of static and closed her eyes so she could find Mike. Just one more time.

Hopper snored and turned over as El tied a black piece of fabric over her eyes. Her curls fought against it, but she managed to tie it anyways. She closed her eyes under the fabric and concentrated.

He was in the fort again. She wondered why he had kept it up for so long. Waiting for her? She hoped so.

“El? Come in, El. It’s me, Mike. Can you hear me?”

She wanted to say something. She could. But she had promised Hopper. She had promised.

“Do you remember the night I kissed you El? In the school? I hope I didn’t make you mad. I just...I like you a lot El.”

El walked up to him and swallowed.

“Mike,” she whispered. “In a special way?”

“El? Are you out there? Are you...are you ok? Are you mad at me?”

“No,” she whispered again. “No. I like you too, Mike.”

The pool beneath her feet reflected Mike’s sad expression. “I’m sorry, El. I’m sorry I didn’t protect you.”

El reached out to touch Mike’s hand. He evaporated into a gust of white smoke.

“Mike!” She yelled. “Mike, I’m sorry!”

A hand clamped down on her shoulder and she gasped. Suddenly she was back in the cabin, with a black cloth around her eyes. She ripped it off and looked up at Hopper, who stood over her.

“Hey, are you trying to contact him again?”

“No,” she gasped, tears welling up in her eyes. “He can’t see me. He never sees me.”

She put her hands over her eyes and began to cry. Hopper stood over her, awkwardly, and then he reached down and placed his hand on her curls.

“Hey...you just have to wait a little bit longer. You’ll see him soon.”

El threw herself into Hopper’s arms. “He calls every night,” she said. “Every night.”

Hopper patted her on the back. “It’s ok. I know. I know.”

She tried to stop crying, but she was so tired of waiting. She wanted to see Mike, and Dustin, and Lucas. And Will and Joyce and even Nancy and Steve and Johnathan...

“Soon,” Hopper said, guiding her back to bed. “Soon.”

He helped her get into bed and covered her up. She grabbed his hand and hiccupped. “Don’t go,” she said. She didn’t want to be alone. They always left her alone.

“Alright, alright. How about we read some, ok?” He tugged one of the books down from the shelf above her head.

He sat down in the chair next to the bed and scooted it closer. “I can move things’, Matilda said. ‘I know I can. I can push things over.’ ‘How would you like it,’ Miss Honey said, ‘if we made some very cautious experiments...”